

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action mailed August 9th, 2006, the Examiner took the following action: (1) allowed claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-37, and 41-43; (2) rejected claims 38, 44, and 45 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pahmeier et al (US 5,359,542); and (3) objected to claims 39, 40, and 46-48 as being dependent upon a rejected base claims.

The Examiner acknowledged, however, that claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-27, 28-37, 41, and 43 are allowable, and that claims 39, 40, and 46-48 would be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of their respective base and intermediate claims. Applicants express appreciation to the Examiner for acknowledging the presence of allowable subject matter. Without additional comment and without prejudice as to the merits of the Examiner's rejections, Applicants have amended claims and canceled claims in order to expedite the issuance of the subject matter acknowledged as being allowable, and without prejudice to the filing of subsequent divisional or continuation applications to pursue allowance of one or more of the rejected claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 38 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 39, placing claim 38 in condition for allowance. Claim 39 has been canceled. Accordingly, claims 38 and 40 (depending from claim 38) are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 44 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 46, placing claim 44 in condition for allowance. Claims 46 and 47 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 44 and 45 and 48 (depending from claim 44) are now in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-38, 40-41, 43-45, and 48 are now in condition for allowance. If there are any remaining matters that may be handled by telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dated: Nov. 15, 2006

By: _____

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